

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

17 December 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available from the [Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center](#). The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

To subscribe, send an email to: HIO-ON@pasba2.amedd.army.mil

To unsubscribe, send an email to: HIO-OFF@pasba2.amedd.army.mil

This report is also available on the [USACHPPM website](#).

HOT TOPICS.....	2
AEterna Gets Nod for Fever Drug	2
AIDS Drug Worth the Risk, Federal Health Official Says	2
Aventis, Chiron to Test Bird Flu Vaccine on Humans	2
Beating Heart Tissue Grown in Lab	3
Death Rates Highest During Holidays.....	3
Diabetes Vaccine Trials to Begin	3
Fighting Tooth Decay with Cranberries	3
Gates Foundation to Give \$42.6M Grant to Fight Malaria.....	4
G7 Calls for Coordinated Action against Flu, Bioterror Risks.....	4
Heavy Metals Found in Indian Herbs	4
New Drug Cuts Tuberculosis Treatment Time in Half.....	4
Sand in This Physics Lab May Eat You Alive.....	5
Smell Test May Predict Alzheimer's Disease	5
Stroke Risk Greater for Migraine Sufferers	5
Tight Deadlines 'Bad for Hearts'	5
U.S. Government Starts Test of SARS Vaccine.....	6
Focus on Epidemiology	6
Fall-Related Injuries during the Holiday Season --- United States, 2000--2003.....	6
DoD-GEIS: Overview of Recent Activities at USAMRU-K.....	6
Influenza Update	7
USCENTCOM	7
Ethiopia: Free HIV Drugs Distribution to be Undertaken by Government	7
Iraq's Civilian Body Count	8
Kenya: Medical Team is Sent to Check Typhoid.....	8
More than 50 Cases of Typhoid Reported in Tajikistan	8
Polio Outbreak in Sudan Raises Alarm	8
USEUCOM	9
Togo: All-In-One Vaccination Campaign for Under-Fives	9
UK Prepares For Flu Pandemic	9

USNORTHCOM	9
European Flu Vaccine to Be Tested in U.S.....	9
Four Injected With Raw Toxin	10
Parasites Prove Puppy Love Can be Infectious	10
Vaccinating Mice Could Reduce Lyme Disease.....	10
USPACOM	11
Avian Flu Discovered Among Thailand's Wild Bird Population	11
Bangladesh: Diarrhea Kills Five People in Joypurhat	11
India: Jaundice Outbreak in Kupwara Village	11
Indonesia: Bird Flu Virus Hits West Nusa Tenggara	11
Indonesia: Measles Outbreak Kills 10 in Alor.....	11
Outbreak of Q fever in South Australia	12
Philippines: Diarrhea Kills 10 Children in Storm Evacuation Centers	12
USSOUTHCOM.....	12
UNAIDS to Set Up Jamaica Office	12

HOT TOPICS

AEterna Gets Nod for Fever Drug

7 December – The Globe and Mail reported that AEterna Zentaris Inc. of Quebec City said yesterday it has won approval to market in Germany its drug for black fever and to distribute it to German troops infected while serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Canadian biotech company said the German Food and Drug Agency has approved miltefosine, or Impavido, which has a cure rate of 95 per cent for [leishmaniasis](#), the scientific name for black fever. The German government agency also awarded the company a Free Sales Certificate, which paves the way for registration in countries such as Colombia and Pakistan where the parasitic disease is endemic. The infection is a growing problem in Europe, particularly with patients infected with HIV or AIDS. [View Article](#)

AIDS Drug Worth the Risk, Federal Health Official Says

14 December – USA Today reported that a National Institutes of Health official said Edmund Tramont, chief of NIH's Division of [AIDS](#), rewrote a negative safety report on a U.S.-funded drug study in Uganda to cast the drug in a more positive light. Clifford Lane, acting deputy director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), said the drug, nevirapine, is so beneficial in preventing the spread of HIV to the infants of infected mothers that it has been deemed worth the risk. Tramont cited his four decades of medical experience and said that Africans in the midst of an AIDS crisis deserved leniency in meeting U.S. safety standards. Jonathan Fishbein, an expert hired by NIH to improve the agency's research practices, raised concerns that nevirapine may make the AIDS virus resistant to other drugs in its class. The issue so concerns scientists that it is routinely addressed at scientific meetings. [View Article](#)

Aventis, Chiron to Test Bird Flu Vaccine on Humans

11 December – Reuters reported that Aventis-Pasteur and Chiron Corp are due to start human testing of a vaccine against [bird flu](#) as early as this month. "Two firms, Aventis and Chiron have been working

on a clinical small series. They have finished that and it is being tested," Klaus Stohr, the head of the WHO's global influenza program said. "At the beginning of next year or in December it will go into clinical tests on humans." [View Article](#)

Beating Heart Tissue Grown in Lab

15 December – BBC News reported that scientists have cultured small pieces of heart tissue which beat in the same way as the whole organ. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology team, hope the work will lead to new ways of repairing heart damage. They grew the tissue from a few rat heart cells which were placed on an artificial scaffold, and then stimulated with an electric current. Researchers said: "Think of it as a patch for a broken heart." Myocardium, or heart muscle cells, cannot regenerate after injury, limiting the effectiveness of standard therapies. [View Article](#)

Death Rates Highest During Holidays

13 December – HealthDayNews reported that Americans are more likely to die on Christmas Day, the day after Christmas, and on New Year's Day than on any other day of the year. In a study of 53 million U.S. death certificates from 1973 to 2001, researchers discovered significant spikes in both cardiac and non-cardiac deaths during the holidays. Lead researcher David Phillips, a professor of sociology at the University of California at San Diego believes the phenomenon may stem from patients' tendency to postpone medical care during the holidays, as well as holiday-specific staffing patterns at hospitals nationwide. "In the case of heart deaths, there's an 11.9 percent excess [of deaths] on those days" beyond what would normally be expected during that season, Phillips said. "In the case of the non-heart deaths for those three days, what you find is an extra 12.2 percent of deaths," he added. [View Article](#)

Diabetes Vaccine Trials to Begin

13 December – BBC News reported that a vaccine that could cure Type 1 [diabetes](#) is to be tested on people for the first time. The vaccine works by stopping the destruction of pancreas cells that produce insulin, which is needed to break down sugar in the normal way. People with Type 1 diabetes tend to develop the condition before the age of 40 and have to inject themselves with the hormone insulin every day. Without these injections their blood sugar would become dangerously high and they would die. Although the exact cause of Type 1 diabetes is unknown, the body's defense system is thought to be involved, mounting an abnormal attack on its own cells. Two UK teams believe they have found a way to prevent this self-destruction. The vaccine contains a protein that encourages the production of protective immune cells to defend the cells in the pancreas against attack. [View Article](#)

Fighting Tooth Decay with Cranberries

12 December – The News Scotsman reported that cranberries could be an important weapon in the fight against [tooth decay](#). The British Dental Health Foundation said the humble cranberry could help prevent a host of oral health problems, including gum disease and tooth decay. But they warned there was also a downside, with the acidity of cranberry juice meaning it should be limited to mealtimes. It follows research which found that cranberry juice stopped harmful bacteria sticking to the teeth. The team said that by stopping bacteria attaching to the teeth, cranberry juice ensured that plaque never got the chance to form. [View Article](#)

Gates Foundation to Give \$42.6M Grant to Fight Malaria

13 December – USA Today reported that combating [malaria](#) has been one of the primary goals of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and its latest gift of \$42.6 million will fund a nonprofit drug company's high-tech take on an ancient Chinese remedy. OneWorld Health will try to turn the genetic engineering efforts of Jay Keasling of the University of California, Berkley into an inexpensive and effective drug to fight malaria in the third world. Keasling is developing a new way to manufacture artemisinin, which is made from finely ground wormwood plants. Chinese first extracted artemisinin from the sweet wormwood for medicinal use more than 2,000 years ago. Since then it has been applied to a variety of ailments, but the method is expensive, time consuming and limited by access to wormwood. Keasling and his colleagues are trying to eliminate the need for the plant by splicing its chemical-producing genes and yeast genes into E. coli, ultimately coaxing artemisinin from this creation. [View Article](#)

G7 Calls for Coordinated Action against Flu, Bioterror Risks

12 December – The Financial Express reported that health ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) countries and Mexico unveiled their latest steps to combat [bioterrorism](#) and heighten preparedness to tackle a feared [flu](#) virus that could claim millions of lives. The ministers said they had made "significant progress" on building joint surveillance networks to detect outbreaks of chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons, as well as bacteria or viruses. These included a round-the-clock system of alerting fellow countries and coordinating a response to such attacks. The ministers also gave their backing to proposals to set up a global stockpile of smallpox vaccine. The United States has pledged 20 million doses from its own vaccine stocks for the world stockpile, France five million, Britain four million and Germany two million. A G7 working group has also been at work identifying priorities for coping with any new flu pandemic. View Article at http://www.financialexpress-bd.com/index3.asp?cnd=12/12/2004§ion_id=5&newsid=6783&spcl=no

Heavy Metals Found in Indian Herbs

14 December – HealthDayNews reported that one in five herbal products tied to an ancient Indian form of alternative medicine could contain potentially toxic levels of heavy metals such as lead, mercury and arsenic. [Ayurvedic medicines](#) are regulated under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA), which many people believe to be too lax. Researchers identified every store within a 20-mile radius of Boston City Hall that sold Ayurvedic herbal medicine products made in South Asia and purchased all that were intended for oral consumption. Overall, 14 of the 70 products contained lead, mercury or arsenic, or more than one. The authors of the study called for mandatory testing of all such products. "This study points to the need for Congress to pass regulations that make heavy metal testing mandatory for all dietary supplements, including Ayurvedic products," the lead author said. [View Article](#)

New Drug Cuts Tuberculosis Treatment Time in Half

13 December – Health Talk reported that a new drug may revolutionize the way [tuberculosis](#) is treated around the world. Researchers identified a novel antibiotic that works better and faster in treating TB infection than current standard treatment options. A compound called R207910 cut treatment time by 50 percent in mouse models. Preliminary studies on human volunteers show the drug is safe, according to the researchers. R207910, belongs to a new family of anti-TB agents called diarylquinolines (DARQ) and worked better at clearing infection from the lungs of mice than the triple cocktail regimen currently recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). Each year about nine million new cases of TB occur around the world and 2 million people die every year from the

infection. Experts believe R207910 could become the first new drug in 40 years to combat the deadly disease. [View Article](#)

Sand in This Physics Lab May Eat You Alive

14 December – The New York Times reported that the traditional deathtrap quicksand is a slurry of sand, water and clay. The water keeps the sand from sticking together and a person who steps in slowly sinks. Researchers showed that it is possible to vanish into a pile of completely dry sand as well. Worse, their sand looks the same as the normal, weight-supporting variety. They puffed air through fine-grained sand, shuffling the grains of sand into a more precarious arrangement. Even after the sand settled, the packing density of the grains was an airy 41 percent, down from 60 percent initially. The fluffy sand was incapable of supporting a Ping-Pong ball weighed down with bits of bronze which immediately sank without a splash. The findings could explain reports of travelers being swallowed up in the desert. [View Article](#)

Smell Test May Predict Alzheimer's Disease

13 December – MSNBC reported that a simple scratch and sniff test may help doctors identify patients with [Alzheimer's disease](#). They found that patients with early Alzheimer's disease may be unable to smell certain odors, including strawberry, smoke, soap and cloves. "Early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease is critical for patients and their families to receive the most beneficial treatment and medications," said Dr. Davangere Devanand, a professor of psychiatry and neurology at New York's Columbia University. "While currently there is no cure for the disease, early diagnosis and treatment can help patients and their families to better plan their lives." Alzheimer's, which affects an estimated 4.5 million Americans, is an incurable and always fatal brain disease. [View Article](#)

Stroke Risk Greater for Migraine Sufferers

13 December – Reuters reported that [migraine](#) sufferers are twice as likely to have a [stroke](#) as people who are not afflicted with the debilitating headaches, Canadian and American scientists say. A review of 14 studies into the link between the headaches and stroke showed patients who have auras, or light effects, with their migraine are even more at risk. Three studies indicated that women who have migraines and who take oral contraceptives were up to 8 times more likely to have a stroke than those not taking the pill. Researchers believe the raised risk is due to the reduced blood flow to the brain that occurs during a migraine. Ischemic stroke, which is caused by a blood clot that blocks a blood vessel or artery in the brain, is the most common type of stroke. Millions of people around the globe suffer from migraine, a severe throbbing headache that can cause vomiting, nausea and sensitivity to light, sound and smells. [View Article](#)

Tight Deadlines 'Bad for Hearts'

14 December – BBC News reported that people working hard to get a task completed on time were six times more likely to have a [heart attack](#) in the next 24 hours than co-workers. Short bursts of high-pressure work were worse for the heart than stressful events in the preceding year, a Swedish study of 3,500 people said. The study tracked the number of first heart attacks that occurred in healthy people who were aged between 45 and 70 when the study started in the early 1990s. Researchers found high demands, competition and conflict in the workplace were linked to heart attack risk. Men were 80% more likely to have a heart attack if they had experienced a conflict at work within the preceding year. For women, a change in financial circumstances tripled their risk. Women were also three times as likely, and men six times as likely to have a heart attack if they had taken on increased responsibilities at work, particularly when they viewed such duties negatively. Of those questioned,

8% had experienced a stressful work-related event the day before they had a heart attack. This was much higher than the proportion who had faced stressful events unrelated to work. [View Article](#)

U.S. Government Starts Test of SARS Vaccine

13 December – Reuters reported that the first U.S. vaccine against [SARS](#) is ready to be tested in human volunteers. The Phase I safety trial, done to show the SARS shot causes no harm, will take place at the Vaccine Research Center, part of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The researchers will use a vaccine that was reported in March to work safely and effectively in mice. They will seek 10 volunteers for the trial. Chinese researchers began human testing of a SARS vaccine in May. The team at Sinovac Biotech Ltd. said on Monday that their vaccine appeared safe in people and prompted a desirable immune response in 23 out of 24 volunteers. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

Fall-Related Injuries during the Holiday Season --- United States, 2000--2003

10 December – MMWR reported that although [fall-related injuries](#) occur throughout the year, few studies have analyzed seasonal patterns, and none have examined the extent of such injuries associated with holiday decorating. During 2000--2003, an estimated 17,465 persons were treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments (EDs) for holiday-decorating--related falls. Approximately 62% of those injured were aged 20--49 years; approximately 43% of injuries were caused by falls from ladders; and males were 40% more likely than females to be injured. The holiday season was defined as November 1--January 31, when decorating or related activities (e.g., stringing and removing outdoor lights) usually occur. The majority of falls were from ladders, followed by roofs, furniture, stairs, and porches. Other falls were caused by tripping over or slipping on holiday-related objects. Among 46% of injured persons, injuries occurred to the extremities; most persons (88%) examined in EDs were treated and released, and 12% were hospitalized. Fractures were the most commonly reported injury (34%); approximately half (51%) of the fractures were caused by falls from ladders. Of those who fell from ladders, nearly half (47%) were hospitalized. [View Article](#)

DoD-GEIS: Overview of Recent Activities at USAMRU-K

16 December - The many facets of surveillance and research at US Army Medical Research Unit-Kenya (USAMRU-K, Nairobi) offer opportunities for trainees to gain hands-on experience in tropical diseases during training rotations. Current work at USAMRU-K focuses on malaria, leishmaniasis, HIV and syndromic surveillance of acute febrile illness. Recently, GEIS sponsored a fourth-year medical student for one month of training at USAMRU-K during which he focused on the GEIS Febrile Illness Surveillance (FRI) project under the mentorship of the lab GEIS Coordinator. The FRI study enrolls patients presenting to clinics and hospitals with acute febrile illness to track the incidence and examine the causes of acute fever in Kenya. The medical student spent ten days in Malindi with the study's clinical officer, rounding on the wards and recruiting patients. An important aspect of the FRI study is evaluation of rapid diagnostic kits, which permit diagnosis at study sites instead of the central lab. Over the next few weeks, GEIS at USAMRU-K will undertake evaluation of several rapid kits for infectious illness diagnosis. *GEIS supports field and laboratory epidemiology training rotations of approximately 1 month at all of the DoD overseas research laboratories (USAMRU-K; NAMRU-2, Jakarta, Indonesia; NAMRU-3, Cairo, Egypt; NMRC, Lima, Peru; and AFRIMS, Bangkok, Thailand).* Submitted by MAJ Sheryl Bedno, MC, USA, GEIS Coordinator – USAMRU-K. Information on many

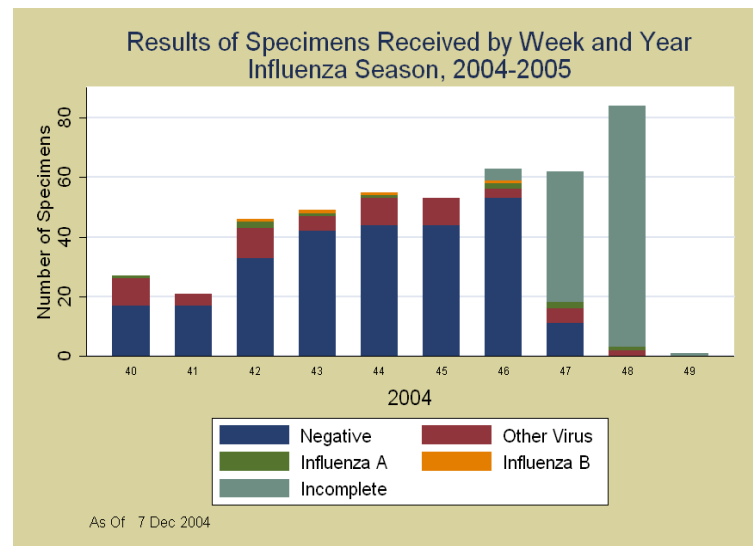
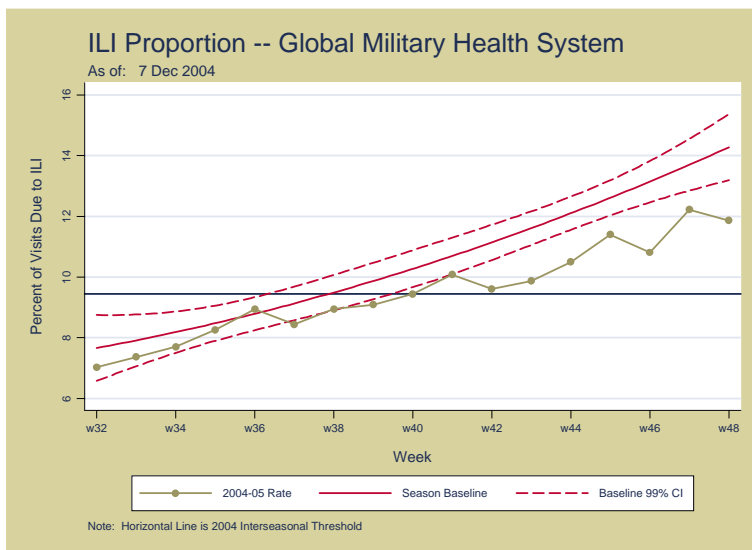
“hot topics” such as Influenza (avian and human), Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available on the [DoD-GEIS website](#).

Influenza Update

DOD Worldwide Influenza Surveillance Program for Week Ending 4 December – Week 48

Influenza-Like Illness This graph plots the percentage of weekly outpatient visits at military installations that had an ICD-9 code correlating with Influenza-Like Illness as defined by [ESSENCE](#).

Since **3 October 2004**, the Epidemiological Surveillance Division (AFIOH/SDE) has processed 333 specimens as part of the influenza surveillance program. Of those specimens, 10 (3%) were positive for influenza A and 4 (1%) were positive for influenza B. In addition, 74 specimens are still being processed.



Other timely information can be found in:

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)
This week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Ethiopia: Free HIV Drugs Distribution to be Undertaken by Government

10 December – All Africa reported that Ethiopia is to begin free distribution of drugs for people with [HIV](#). As part of a \$43 million program, the US government will provide antiretroviral drugs for up to

15,000 people this year. "You can consider this the start of the treatment era, in which free treatment will be made available in increasing numbers over the years," Tadesse Wahub, head of the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Ethiopia, said. The number of people receiving the drugs will be expanded to 210,000 people within the next five years, and 20 million people will be screened for the virus. Pay-as-you-go treatment began in September 2004, but under the new government strategy, the program will be expanded to people living with HIV who cannot afford the cost of the drugs. Dr Tadesse added. "It is not only drugs that you are providing. You need to put in place a health care infrastructure and health care systems." He said that over the last year, they have worked to ensure that the 20 hospitals can effectively deliver the drugs to patients. [View Article](#)

Iraq's Civilian Body Count

12 December – The Sunday Herald reported that in Sadr City – renamed from Saddam City – the economy is in ruins. Electricity supplies are erratic and the water is so dirty that there are constant outbreaks of [cholera](#), [hepatitis E](#) and [diarrhea](#). Civilian casualty figures, while difficult to monitor, are undoubtedly high. Last month, The Lancet published a report that estimated there had been some 98,000 civilian casualties in Iraq as a result of the US-led invasion and occupation. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has refuted this saying, "This is an estimate relying on media reports, and which we do not regard as reliable. It includes civilian deaths at the hands of terrorists as well as of the coalition forces," in a written statement to the Commons in November. [View Article](#)

Kenya: Medical Team is Sent to Check Typhoid

11 December – All Africa reported that a team of medical personnel was sent to Mt. Elgon District to control an outbreak of [typhoid](#) in Kapkateny area. The outbreak has claimed a student and several people have been admitted to Bungoan and Mt. Elgon hospitals. The local district commissioner confirmed that one person had died due to the outbreak. The district medical officer of health said of the 300 patients tested, only 100 were found to be suffering from the disease. More than 40 percent of the homes and markets in the area lacked sanitation facilities. A mobile clinic was to be set up in the area because the existing health facilities were not enough to effectively contain the disease. Water samples were found to be contaminated and locals were warned against polluting the rivers. [View Article](#)

More than 50 Cases of Typhoid Reported in Tajikistan

14 December – Yahoo! News reported that more than 50 people including 40 children have contracted [typhoid fever](#) in southwestern Tajikistan and have been hospitalized. All the cases were recorded in the village of Kolkhozabad, some 70 miles south of the capital Dushanbe, the official told AFP, adding that a nearby pond may be contaminated. That epidemic was blamed on a lack of water treatment facilities. [View Article](#)

Polio Outbreak in Sudan Raises Alarm

13 December – The Atlanta Journal Constitution reported that in Darfur, Sudan, people are fearful of [polio](#) after a child in the town of Kass, less than 90 miles to the south, was paralyzed by it six months ago. Since then, the number of cases of polio-induced paralysis in Sudan has soared to 54 — a dramatic rebound in a country that had eradicated polio three years ago. Because paralysis of limbs occurs in only 1 in 200 cases, health experts say there is a high probability that more than 10,000 Sudanese have been infected with the virus. Particularly disturbing for health workers is the virus' potential for spreading in the crowded refugee camps of western Sudan and neighboring Chad, inhabited by nearly 2 million people. [View Article](#) (registration required)

USEUCOM

Togo: All-In-One Vaccination Campaign for Under-Fives

13 December – IRIN News reported that in an all-in-one pilot campaign almost a million Togolese children between nine months and five years are to be vaccinated free of charge against measles and polio as well as being given mosquito nets treated with repellent to fight malaria and pills to treat intestinal worms. Togo's health authorities said 95 percent of the country's small children aged between 9 months and five years would be vaccinated under the US \$6 million scheme. The impregnated nets are particularly important in Togo, where malaria is the leading cause of child illness, responsible for 43 percent of medical consultations and 44 percent of the children treated in hospital. Six percent of children aged below five die of the disease. [View Article](#)

UK Prepares For Flu Pandemic

12 December – Guardian Unlimited reported that emergency plans are being drawn up by government health advisers to deal with a potential outbreak of [bird flu](#) in Britain. Measures being considered include closing schools, cinemas or theatres in affected areas, quarantining those who come into contact with victims, canceling routine operations to allow hospitals to deal with the outbreak, and public education. Highly sensitive consultations are also taking place over who would be given priority for early protective drug therapy. The anti-viral drugs that can treat the disease would probably cover only up to a third of the population. Healthcare workers, as well as emergency service staff, would be given priority, as would women in the later stages of pregnancy. The new scheme could include computer staff in a group of 'essential' workers who would have to be treated in order to ensure the economy did not collapse in the event of a pandemic. The virus carries a 73 per cent mortality rate, so fast action would need to be taken once the infection appeared. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

European Flu Vaccine to Be Tested in U.S.

10 December – ABC News reported that a European-produced [flu vaccine](#) widely used in other countries will be tested at four locations in the U.S. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease is launching the trial to increase the supply of flu vaccine in this country. While more than 126 million doses of the test vaccine, Fluarix, have been distributed in more than 70 countries worldwide, Fluarix has never been tested or licensed for use in the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson has announced a plan to import 4 million doses of Fluarix as an investigational new drug. Volunteers who agree to be given Fluarix must first sign an informed consent form acknowledging that they are aware of the potential risks and benefits associated with the investigational vaccine. In the trial, four out of every five participants will receive Fluarix, while the fifth will receive a placebo. Those who receive the placebo vaccine will be offered U.S.-licensed flu vaccine at the conclusion of the month-long study. The trial will be conducted at the University of Rochester Medical Center, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, University of Maryland School of Medicine and Baylor College of Medicine. [View Article](#)

Fewer Teens Having Sex, U.S. Says

11 December – HealthDayNews reported that fewer American teenagers are having sex, and those who do are using contraceptives more often. The decline was sharpest among boys and younger teenage girls. The rate of females between the ages of 15 and 17 who reported ever having sexual intercourse fell from 38 percent in 1995 to 30 percent in 2002. The rate among older teenagers barely changed in that time period, though. Among boys between the ages of 15 and 17, the rate dropped from 43 percent in 1995 to 31 percent in 2002, and among those 18 and 19 years old, it fell from 75 percent to 64 percent. Contraceptive use rose to 79 percent in 1999-2002 from 61 percent in the 1980s. [View Article](#)

Four Injected With Raw Toxin

15 December – Newsday reported that the anti-wrinkle shots that paralyzed four people with [botulism](#) contained a large dose of raw, unapproved toxin that the Florida clinic bought from a California laboratory. The suspended clinic doctor who gave the shots, Bach McComb, diluted the mixture as if it were made from lower-strength Botox instead of high-potency raw toxin, federal agents said. Clinic assistant Thomas M. Toia told FDA agents he calculated the toxin was the equivalent of 20,000 units of Botox and said he warned McComb to use much more saline. Toia said McComb injected himself and his girlfriend that day and two more people the next day. All remain virtually paralyzed in critical but stable condition. [View Article](#)

Parasites Prove Puppy Love Can be Infectious

14 December – The Boston Herald reported that the contagious intestinal parasite [giardia](#) has turned up in some pet stores, sickening dogs and staffers alike. Saugus health agent Sharon McCabe ordered employees at the Square One Mall pet shop, Woof & Co., to get tested for giardia after a number of dogs in the store tested positive for the parasite. "My concern was for the employees. They could get it from taking care of the dogs," McCabe said. The tests came back negative but several employees reported nausea and intestinal discomfort. Anyone who handles puppies in a pet store or shelter should wash up with soap and water. [View Article](#)

Vaccinating Mice Could Reduce Lyme Disease

13 December – Reuters reported that vaccinating mice against [Lyme disease](#) may help protect people against the infection, which is often spread from mice to humans. The study is one of the first to show that immunizing a wild animal that carries a disease might serve to protect humans, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said. "When integrated with other protective measures, this strategy could have significant implications, not only for preventing Lyme disease, but for preventing other vector-borne diseases as well, including plague and West Nile virus," said NIAID head Dr. Anthony Fauci. Lyme disease passes from mice and other small rodents to people via black-footed ticks. Often deer are involved. It would be necessary to develop a vaccine that could be given orally, probably in mouse bait, the researchers said. For their study, the team at Yale University and elsewhere caught 1,000 white-footed mice, drew their blood, examined the ticks in their fur and then vaccinated half of them. When an infected tick nymph feeds on an immunized mouse, the mouse's immune system kills the bacteria inside the nymph. After vaccinating the mice, the researchers found 55 percent fewer tick nymphs were infected. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

Avian Flu Discovered Among Thailand's Wild Bird Population

13 December – ProMED reported that a recent survey of wild birds in central Thailand has shown six species infected with [bird flu](#). The results came from a random sampling of more than 1000 migratory and indigenous birds in 4 central provinces where infected poultry had previously been discovered: Nakhon Sawan, Lop Buri, Chachoengsao, and Saraburi. Meanwhile, the Livestock Development Department has announced that 71 areas in 19 provinces have reported cases of the virus, with new outbreaks in the southern provinces of Pattani and Narathiwat. Since the country was hit by a 2nd-round bird-flu outbreak in July 2004, Thailand has recorded five confirmed cases of bird flu among humans. Four of the victims died, while the last patient recovered. [View Article](#)

Bangladesh: Diarrhea Kills Five People in Joypurhat

10 December - The Pacific Disaster Management Information Network reported that a [diarrhea](#) epidemic that broke out in the remote villages of Sadar and Akkelpur upazilas has killed five people this past week. The disease has affected more than 600 people in the two upazilas so far. Several medical teams are working round the clock in the affected unions to combat the disease. [View Article](#)

India: Jaundice Outbreak in Kupwara Village

11 December – Greater Kashmir reported that an epidemic of [jaundice](#) has broken out in the remote village of Kupwara. A couple in their seventies has died and 20 other persons have been diagnosed positive for the disease. A dispensary that once existed in this village, officials say, was “shifted because of militancy” to Babernag village in the mid-nineties. Babernag is nine kilometers away and in absence of a road link, people walk on foot to visit the dispensary. [View Article](#)

Indonesia: Bird Flu Virus Hits West Nusa Tenggara

13 December – ProMED reported that [bird flu](#) has broken out in several parts of West Nusa Tenggara, killing thousands of birds in the provincial capital of Mataram (less than 100 km east of Bali). The Mataram agriculture and animal husbandry office said that more than 20,000 birds, or 43 percent of the poultry population in 10 out of the 23 subdistricts in the city, had been infected by the avian influenza virus. The outbreak was less severe in the other 13 subdistricts, where about 10 percent of the total poultry population was affected. Dian said the bird flu virus had only attacked free-range poultry in those areas. To prevent the virus from spreading further, the local husbandry office is providing 250,000 doses of the A1 type vaccine for free. There have been no reports that the virus has infected human beings in Mataram. [View Article](#)

Indonesia: Measles Outbreak Kills 10 in Alor

9 December – ProMED reported that an outbreak of [measles](#) has hit the Alor regency, with 10 people in Padangsul Tamalabang sub-district reportedly dying of the disease and 149 others seriously ill. An outbreak of the disease in October spread to three other sub-districts in the regency, killing 26 residents. [View Article](#)

Outbreak of Q fever in South Australia

14 December – ABC Rural reported that South Australia is dealing with its largest outbreak of the virus [Q fever](#) in more than a decade. Nine farmers in the state's mid-north have the disease, and there are another six suspected cases. Dr. Jack Shephard, from Jamestown, says anyone who comes in contact with sheep, cattle, goats or kangaroos could contract the disease. Dr. Shephard says it's likely his patients got it from the local sheep saleyards in October. [View Article](#)

Philippines: Diarrhea Kills 10 Children in Storm Evacuation Centers

9 December - The Pacific Disaster Management Information Network reported that approximately 10 children have died from [diarrhea](#) and dysentery in evacuation centers for storm victims. The UN Children's Fund and the World Health Organization say the lack of potable water, stagnant water, and existing weather conditions in the affected areas pose a great risk to the health of the evacuees, especially children. [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

UNAIDS to Set Up Jamaica Office

13 December – The Jamaica Gleaner reported that Jamaica's efforts to combat the [HIV/AIDS](#) pandemic is expected to be strengthened significantly with the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) establishing an office here. John Junor, the minister of health, said the UNAIDS and its partnering agencies have been instrumental in providing both financial and technical assistance in the fight against the pandemic in Jamaica. Most notably, the minister said, "UNAIDS has also been instrumental in the reduction of prices for antiretroviral drugs for Jamaica and together with UNICEF provided funds for the pilot project for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV." The new office in Jamaica will be headed by Miriam Maluwa, the UNAIDS senior adviser on law and human rights, and will also serve Cuba and the Bahamas. [View Article](#)

Please contact us to comment on or suggest improvements to this report.

Eileen Resta
eileen.resta@amedd.army.mil

Tyson Grier
tyson.grier@amedd.army.mil

Approved:
[Kevin Delaney](#)
Chief, Health Information Operations
(410) 436-5217 or DSN 584-5217